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### **TEXTILE PLANT EMPLOYMENT IN THE SOUTHEAST: ANNUAL AVERAGE 2001**

Textile plant employment in the Southeast<sup>1</sup> and in the nation continued to decline in 2001, according to Janet S. Rankin, regional commissioner for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, in Atlanta. Nationwide, textile plants employed on average 472,500 workers in 2001, reflecting a decrease of 55,900 jobs (or -10.6 percent) from the 2000 annual average employment level. The drop was the largest over-the-year decrease recorded in the industry since 1982. Over the past 20 years, the U.S. textile industry has declined by 350,500 jobs (-42.6 percent). Almost 16 percent of those losses occurred in 2001.

Over three quarters of the nation's textile employment continues to be located in southeastern states. Southeastern states showing significant textile job losses in 2001 included North Carolina (-17,500), Georgia (-8,400), South Carolina (-6,000), Alabama (-3,000) and Virginia (-2,500). Mississippi and Florida, where textile employment is comparatively small, recorded the largest percentage decreases. States with sizable textile employment that decreased at a rate higher than the nation included North Carolina (-12.2 percent) and Tennessee (-11.5 percent).

North Carolina, where the largest share of southeastern textile employment is located, accounted for nearly a third of the nation's job losses, dropping 17,500 jobs in 2001. Over the last five years, North Carolina has seen its share of the nation's textile employment decline from 29.4 percent in 1996 to 26.6 percent in 2001. Although Georgia showed a loss of 8,400 jobs in 2001, its share of the total industry employment has grown from 17.3 percent in 1996 to 19.7 percent. South Carolina recorded a loss of 6,000 textile plant jobs in 2001, maintaining its 13 percent share of the industry's remaining employment.

Among southeastern states, Kentucky recorded the largest increase in average hourly earnings in 2001, up \$1.07 (9.6 percent). Kentucky had the region's highest average hourly earnings, at \$12.26, and was the only state in the region whose average hourly earnings were above the national average. Other states in the region with increases above the national average included Virginia (26 cents or 2.4 percent) and Florida (25 cents or 2.7 percent). The largest decrease was in Mississippi, where average hourly earnings decreased 31 cents (-3.1 percent).

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<sup>1</sup> The BLS definition of the Southeast has been expanded to include all of the South Atlantic Census Division (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the East South Central Census Division (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee).

Most southeastern states reported a drop in the average workweek in 2001. North Carolina and South Carolina recorded the largest decreases, with South Carolina declining 1.8 hours to 40.7 hours and North Carolina declining 2.1 hours to 39.3 hours. In Florida, the average workweek increased by 4.7 hours to 45.2 hours.

In 2001, Kentucky reported the highest average weekly earnings in the Southeast. Although the workweek in Kentucky textile plants was the shortest in the region, and actually decreased 4.2 percent over the year, a 9.6 percent increase in average hourly earnings resulted in a 5.0 percent gain in average weekly earnings to \$475.69. Florida reported the largest increase in average weekly earnings, up \$55.05 to \$432.11, mostly due to an 11.6 percent increase in average weekly hours. Despite the rise, average weekly earnings in the state's textile industry remained below the national average of \$454.00. The largest decrease was in Mississippi, where both the workweek and hourly earnings declined, resulting in a decline of \$21.14 to \$378.85 – the lowest average weekly earnings in the region and almost 17 percent below the national average. In 2000, Georgia had reported the highest average weekly earnings, but declined in 2001 by \$17.17 (-3.6 percent), as average hourly earnings dropped 2.2 percent and average weekly hours declined 1.4 percent. At \$456.54, Georgia's weekly earnings remained slightly above the national average.

### **Technical Note**

**Definitions.** Employment data refer to persons on establishment payrolls who receive pay for any part of the pay period which includes the 12th of the month, except for federal government employment, which represents the number of persons who occupied positions on the last day of the month. Persons are counted at their place of work rather than at their place of residence; those appearing on more than one payroll are counted on each payroll. Industries are classified on the basis of their principal product or activity in accordance with the 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Manual. This release covers the major group SIC 22, Textile Mill Products.

**Annual revisions.** All estimates in this release are adjusted to first quarter 2001 benchmark levels. Data relate to all full-time and part-time employment in Alabama, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia and were compiled by state employment security agencies in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A brief technical description of statistics based on establishment records is presented in the explanatory notes of Employment and Earnings, a publication of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Employment estimates are adjusted annually to a complete count of jobs, called benchmarks, derived principally from tax reports which are submitted by employers who are covered under state unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The benchmark information is used to adjust the monthly estimates between the new benchmark and the preceding one and also to establish the level of employment for the new benchmark month. Thus, the benchmarking process establishes the level of employment, and the sample is used to measure the month-to-month changes in the level for the subsequent months.

Caution on aggregating state data. State estimation procedures are designed to produce accurate data for each individual state. BLS independently develops a national employment series; state estimates are not forced to sum to national totals. Because each state series is subject to larger sampling and nonsampling

errors than the national series, summing them cumulates individual state level errors and can cause significant distortions at an aggregate level. Due to these statistical limitations, BLS does not compile a "sum-of-states" employment series, and cautions users that such a series is subject to a relatively large and volatile error structure.

The estimates presented in this release are based on sample survey and administrative data and thus are subject to sampling and other types of errors. Sampling error is a measure of sampling variability--that is, variation that occurs by chance because a sample rather than the entire population is surveyed. Survey data also are subject to nonsampling errors, such as those which can be introduced into the data collection and processing operations. Measures of sampling error are not available for state Current Employment Statistics data, but the relatively large size of the samples maintained by the state agencies and the annual adjustment of employment estimates to more recent benchmark levels assure a high degree of accuracy. Information on recent benchmark revisions for states is available upon request.

### **Additional information**

More complete information on the technical procedures used to develop these estimates and additional data appear in Employment and Earnings, which is available by subscription for \$50.00 a year from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (telephone 202-512-1800), and from the BLS Handbook of Methods, Bulletin 2490, August 1997. Employment data from the Current Employment Statistics program are available at <http://www.bls.gov/sae/home.htm>. Information in this release are available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone: 1-800- 877-8339.

Table 1. Annual average employment for textile plant workers for the United States and southeastern states, 1996-2001

(numbers in thousands)

Area	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Net change 2000-2001	Percent change 2000-2001
United States	626.5	616.1	597.6	558.9	528.4	472.5	-55.9	-10.6
Alabama	40.0	39.8	39.2	38.1	37.8	34.8	-3.0	-7.9
Delaware	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
District of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	4.2	4.4	4.3	3.8	3.6	2.9	-0.7	-19.4
Georgia	108.6	107.2	106.0	104.5	101.6	93.2	-8.4	-8.3
Kentucky	8.5	7.8	4.9	4.0	4.2	4.0	-0.2	-4.8
Maryland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mississippi	4.2	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.2	3.3	-0.9	-21.4
North Carolina	184.4	177.2	168.4	154.1	143.0	125.5	-17.5	-12.2
South Carolina	81.4	79.4	76.0	71.3	68.9	62.9	-6.0	-8.7
Tennessee	19.4	18.6	17.6	16.1	15.6	13.8	-1.8	-11.5
Virginia	36.0	35.2	33.0	29.4	26.4	23.9	-2.5	-9.5
West Virginia	1.1	1.1	1.0	-	-	-	-	-

- not available.

Table 2. Annual average weekly hours and gross average earnings of textile production workers for the United States and southeastern states, 2000-2001 <sup>1/</sup>

Area	Average hourly earnings			Average weekly hours			Average weekly earnings		
	2000	2001	Percent change 2000-2001	2000	2001	Percent change 2000-2001	2000	2001	Percent change 2000-2001
United States	\$11.16	\$11.35	1.7	41.2	40.0	-2.9	\$459.79	\$454.00	-1.3
Alabama	10.57	10.45	-1.1	41.6	40.3	-3.1	439.71	421.14	-4.2
Delaware	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
District of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	9.31	9.56	2.7	40.5	45.2	11.6	377.06	432.11	14.6
Georgia	11.12	10.87	-2.2	42.6	42.0	-1.4	473.71	456.54	-3.6
Kentucky	11.19	12.26	9.6	40.5	38.8	-4.2	453.20	475.69	5.0
Maryland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mississippi	9.95	9.64	-3.1	40.2	39.3	-2.2	399.99	378.85	-5.3
North Carolina	10.68	10.83	1.4	41.4	39.3	-5.1	442.15	425.62	-3.7
South Carolina	10.49	10.64	1.4	42.5	40.7	-4.2	445.83	433.05	-2.9
Tennessee	10.72	10.83	1.0	39.5	39.4	-0.3	423.44	426.70	0.8
Virginia	10.84	11.10	2.4	42.1	40.8	-3.1	456.36	452.88	-0.8
West Virginia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<sup>1/</sup> Average earnings are computed on a gross basis reflecting changes in basic hourly and incentive wage rates and variable factors affected by absenteeism, turnover, and items such as premium pay for overtime and late shift work. Average weekly hours represent the number of hours worked or paid and may be affected by absenteeism, turnover, and overtime. All data were compiled by state employment security agencies in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- not available.